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Sent: 13 May 2025 20:21
To: Planning
Cc: OperationsManager@sgs.uk.net
Subject: Planning Application The Towers School Upper Beeding UDC/25/0487
Attachments: towers school canopy representations.pages

Categories: Comments Received

The Old House, Hyde Street, Upper Beeding Steyning BN443TG

13th May,2025

Planning Application The Towers School Upper Beeding UDC/25/0487

This Retrospective Application should be rejected, or at the very least substantially amended,with necessary Conditions, for the following reasons

1 The Application Site Is inside the Hyde Street Conservation Area. Our Listed Building [The Old House Hyde Street] is diagonally opposite the site and is within the Same Conservation Area and overlooks the site]. This means that very special consideration - indeed much higher design standards need to be applied to consideration of this. Unfortunately, retrospective application, to avoid its appearance and usage impacting on the character of the Conservation Area and the environmental and historic quality of our Listed Building [which dates back to the 14th Century]. Both the listing of our property and its inclusion in the Conservation area demands a much higher standard of design and respect.

[From Horsham Council Website]
There are currently 39 conservation areas in Horsham District. Most are concentrated around the historic cores of villages and towns and include a range of property ages and types, from Wealden houses, Georgian manor houses, to Victorian terraces and can include modern developments. Gardens, trees, open space, landscaping and street and development layout also form an important part of the character of an area.

See attachment map and photograph. **Please notify me if this attachment cannot be opened**

Government guidelines concerning development near listed buildings prioritise the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, aiming to protect the character and appearance of these valuable assets. Development proposals must not adversely affect the significance of listed buildings or their setting, and substantial harm should be exceptional.
Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to

avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

2. The industrial design of this permanent blue steel framed, sloping, white plastic roofed canopy which the School says is need to protect the physical and mental health of its students, is incongruous against the adjacent buildings. It has a jarring appearance when viewed from Hyde Street, and our Listed Building and its curtilage.

3. It is out of character with the Conservation Area it is situated in.

4. It is a significant, inappropriate increase in the footprint of the already dominating and somewhat utilitarian 3 storey School building.

5. The sloping canopy is raked towards our Listed Building, and is higher on the street side. This has the effect of efficiently broadcasting the noise - including regular screams and bellows from students at the 2 morning and afternoon break times and over lunchtime break, from this now heavily used area. This impacts daily on our quiet enjoyment of our historic Listed Building, and prevents our ability to sit in our garden immediately opposite the de facto concourse area. This area was not used for this purpose when the School was a Convent School, and was well supervised by the Nuns and Staff.

6.In an Email to us responding to our initial concerns, the Operations Manager for the School said ***"****This canopy is a vital improvement for the school community, designed to provide a safe, social space for students to eat, interact, and enjoy a sense of belonging. In today's digital world, where screen time is increasingly replacing face-to-face communication, fostering real social interaction among young people is more important than ever.*

The school is committed to promoting healthy eating habits and positive social engagement, and this new covered area allows students to gather, eat together, and build friendships in a structured and welcoming environment. Given the challenges posed by climate change—such as increased rainfall—outdoor spaces are becoming less usable throughout the year. The canopy ensures that students can still benefit from fresh air and social interaction in all weather conditions.

Furthermore, student mental health and well-being remain a top priority. Having a dedicated, weatherproof space for communal dining and socialising directly supports this, aligning with the school's ethos of being a phone-free environment, where conversation and meaningful interactions take precedence over screen time.

In hindsight, once we had secured approval from the Sisters and other key stakeholders, a proactive communication effort from the school would have been beneficial to maintain transparency and positive relationships with our neighbours. Moving forward, we will review how we handle communications for similar projects, ensuring that information is shared in a timely and constructive manner."

Our response to this is that this does not really address the design or location concerns that we have expressed about the reality of the what now confronts us. Indeed, concern for student well being should not justify the School being less neighbourly and less respectful of the Conservation Area and our rights as the the owner of a very adjacent Listed building of Historic and Architectural Importance.

The School needs to address these concerns now and not when it next seeks to build an industrial Canopy.!

7.Our concerns are heightened by the fact that the Cedar Tree at the bottom of our drive has provided at least a modicum of visual screening and noise attenuation in the past, but has now clearly reached the end of its life. Recent Professional advice is that it will require removal in the next year or so. This will expose even more of the stark reality of the industrial canopy for years to come.

8 If, despite our strong disapproval of the development in its current form, location and extent, the Planning Authority is minded to rubber stamp an unauthorised fait accompli , the very minimum that should be done is to require a tree screening scheme to be submitted and approved in a short specified timescale to continue the existing tree screen within and adjacent to the School curtilage. Or, maybe, require by Conditions that the existing low trimmed beech hedge be required to grow to the height - plus 3 feet or more - of the Application Canopy, and to be trimmed/ maintained and maintained annually at that height.

9 We invite, and sincerely hope that everyone who has a say in deciding this application [and the School's Head and managers] will visit tor site to enable them to give proper weight and consideration to our concerns.

[redacted]


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Sub
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Rising Sun (PH)
A 2037
5.4m
5.0m
2.9m
10.4m

